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*Arbeit und Rhythmus.* Von KARL BUECHER. Leipzig, S. Hertzels, 1896. — 130 pp.

The learned professor at Leipzig, who won his spurs several years ago by his scholarly studies of the mediæval population of Frankfurt, and who later extended his reputation by his brilliant essays on the origin of economic life, now lays a still wider public under obligation by this remarkably suggestive work published by the Royal Saxon Academy of Science. The work is really a study in primitive anthropology, for it is an attempt to investigate the origin of poetry and music. Its interest to economists lies in the fact that Bücher seeks to give an economic interpretation to the evolution of these arts. As the idea is novel, it may be worth while to give a somewhat full account of it.

In the first chapter the author discusses the methods of labor in primitive peoples. He shows that labor itself is an historical category — that man does not work for the love of work and that we cannot assume any natural impulse to work. At the same time, as labor of some kind is necessary, we find coöperative or associated labor assuming more and more importance with the development of society.

In the second chapter he seeks to prove that automatic or purely mechanical movements were among the chief means of overcoming the original disinclination to conscious work. He touches on the psychology of motion, and shows that in the ordinary occupations of life the more protracted the muscular labor, the greater the tendency to observe a certain rhythm. The blacksmith, the carpenter, the thresher let their blows or movements follow in a definite order. The earliest rhythm is, therefore, simply a labor rhythm, where the beats are equal. The tune rhythm develops out of the original labor rhythm when the beats begin to differ from each other in strength or in duration. Numerous examples are given from everyday occupations, such as mowing or weaving or coopering, where various tones are produced in this way. The more coöperative the labor, the more frequently do we find in primitive peoples that the work is done in time or in concert. From this tone rhythm of the work itself, it is only a short step to the employment of the human voice; and thus we get the earliest labor songs.

The third chapter of the work deals with these artificial time beats, or labor songs. Dr. Bücher has collected from all sources, from all ages and from all countries an astonishing number of these labor songs. This chapter alone would repay the reading of the monograph.

In the fourth chapter the author reaches the origin of poetry and music. He shows — what of course was well known before — that poetry and music were originally one — that the bard was the musician. But the rhythmical unity, he maintains, is a triple compound, of which the essential element is labor. He maintains that the same is true of dancing — that, in their origin, music and dancing were one, as is proved by the fact that many nations have only one word to express both ideas. In his opinion the rhythmical element in dancing also rests upon antecedent labor. Confining his attention, however, to music and poetry proper, he shows that both linguistic and musical rhythm depend upon bodily movements; that the first musical instruments were nothing but a development of work tools; that dramatic, lyric and epic poetry can be readily explained as a natural evolution from the primitive labor songs; and that metre itself is intimately associated with this primitive rhythm. Finally, the author devotes a chapter to rhythm as a principle of economic development. He shows how it keeps pace with the various stages of technique, and he believes that in rhythm we shall find one of the chief aids to coöperative economic activity. In its origin, therefore, art — or, at all events, one chief form of art — springs from bodily necessities; and although, when once differentiated from labor, it pursues its own independent and ideal course, at the outset the artistic and economic life were one. Art, then, must not only be considered as valuable for its own sake, but must receive added significance as contributing to the development of economic life.

This, in short, is Dr. Bücher's doctrine. As a study of coöperative labor it is exceedingly suggestive: in fact, Dr. Bücher tells us that he was led to this idea through an investigation of the development of associative effort. There are, it is true, not a few hazardous conjectures and exaggerated claims — as, for instance, the assumed close connection between labor and dancing. Critics will undoubtedly answer that the earliest form of dance is the war dance, and that only by a violent stretch of the imagination can the activities of war and of labor, in general, be termed synonymous. Psychologists, again, will no doubt maintain that the author has unduly minimized the emotional side of human nature, which can be identified only to a very slight degree with the manifestation of that muscular effort which we call labor.

But, whatever be the criticism in detail, there is no doubt that Dr. Bücher has called attention to an important and hitherto neglected factor, even if it be not the only factor, in the problem.

A comparison of his monograph with such a recent work as Grosse's *The Beginnings of Art* shows how far more profound and original is Dr. Bücher's treatment. The facts which he heaps up in profusion are too important to be brushed aside with a contemptuous wave of the hand. Even if he has not discovered the whole truth, he has called our attention to a most interesting element in the evolution of human activity. One need not be an advocate of "economic materialism" to appreciate the importance of Dr. Bücher's latest and most brilliant investigations.

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*Neue Beiträge zur Frage der Arbeitslosen-Versicherung.* Von DR. GEORG SCHANZ. Berlin, Carl Heymanns Verlag, 1897.

It is nearly twelve years since the writer heard from a German economist of note the opinion that insurance against worklessness was only a question of time. In 1891 Dr. Georg Adler expressed the same view. In 1892 Dr. Zacher read before one of the economic societies in Berlin a paper, in which a very skilful attempt was made to show that something like scientific prevision was possible as to the proportion of the idle in the different trades. It was ably argued that this might become a safe basis for future insurance against this evil. At that time it was probably the most bizarre proposal that any one had ventured to make for lessening social ills. The important book published in 1895 by Dr. Schanz, of Würzburg, on the general question of insurance against lack of work, showed, however, how far and how rapidly the theory and the practice had advanced.

It is usual to say that this form of insurance began in Bern. If terms are used rather loosely, this may be admitted; but the plan in Bern bears quite as much resemblance to a form of ordinary charitable relief as to insurance. It is better to begin with the German *Arbeitsnachweis* that has now a history of some dozen years. In the report of this important movement (*Allgemeine Arbeitsnachweis in Deutschland*) which Dr. Freund has just issued, the reader may see how deep a root this system of finding work for the workless has already taken. Reports from different German cities show that in a single year above twenty thousand places for the workless are found. The rise of the *Arbeitsnachweis* has raised the most fundamental questions. It assumes that the current forces of supply and demand cannot be trusted to meet the evil of enforced idleness. It shifts the ground of responsibility, admitting that the causes of much of the lack of employment are beyond control alike of employer and of employed. There was the strongest opposition to the admission